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UNCLAS AMMAN 005128

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STATE FOR ECA/PE/C/CU-SROUSE, NEA/PPD DBENZE

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SUBJECT: AMERICAN MUSIC ABROAD REQUEST FOR AMMAN

REF: STATE 102369

1) Amman requests inclusion in the American Music Abroad Program to take place January March 2006. Our preference is for a four-day program with a hip-hop group in March 2006. We prefer that programs be scheduled during the Sunday through Thursday workweek. PA Amman would cover the expenses detailed in paragraph 3 of reftel. PA Amman has coordinated with PA Tel Aviv and PA Jerusalem on this response cable.

2) This program would support Post's Mission Performance Plan (MPP) goal of building Jordanian understanding and appreciation of U.S. culture, and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' goal of presenting the diversity of American culture to overseas audiences. While elite Jordanians enjoy a high level of exposure to American culture, many parts of Jordanian society are only exposed to caricatures of the United States as seen on satellite television. As a result, misunderstanding of American culture, society and values is widespread. To counteract these perceptions, post has sought to present a diverse set of cultural programs to the Jordanian population as part of its overall public diplomacy strategy. An American Music Abroad program in Jordan would enable post to both continue its cultural engagement and to reach target groups such as high school and university students, and the creative community. We have found that cultural representatives often make the best interlocutors in explaining US society and values to these audiences, as well as to the non-elite segments of society.

3) The priority audience sought for the group's performances will be students and other youth. In particular, this program would also allow post to conduct events for youth at the two new American Corners at the University of Jordan in Amman and Hashemiya University in Zarqa. We are also interested in programming to targeted audiences that have had little exposure to American culture, such as other high school and university students outside of Amman.

4) Performances by a hip-hop group would enhance Post's efforts to expose Jordanians to American art forms and underscore American values of diversity and inclusiveness. In a recent visit by New York's Battery Dance Company, a hip-hop workshop led by troupe members was wildly popular. This style of music is particularly suited to engage the youth audience at this time. There is great interest here in American hip-hop music, but opportunities for live concerts are scarce, airplay is limited, and CDs and tapes are relatively expensive for the general public.

5) Post will coordinate the timing of its program with Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, providing an opportunity for an effective multi-stop regional tour. If a hip-hop group is not available, we will welcome a Latin jazz group, but would prefer one that concentrates on popular styles such as salsa, as we are seeking to engage a very broad audience.

6) Points Of Contacts for this program are:

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